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REMARKS

OF

HON. WILLIAM A. NEWELL,
OF NEW JERSEY,

ON

THE DEATH OF SENATOR WRIGHT.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DECEMBER 18, 1866.

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DEATH OF SENATOR WRIGHT.

A message having been received from the Senate announcing the death of Hon. WILLIAM WRIGHT—

Mr. NEWELL said:

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not move a consideration of the resolutions of the Senate announcing the death of Senator WRIGHT when received this morning, on account of the absence of my colleague from the fifth district, [Mr. WRIGHT,] who was his immediate Representative, and to whom properly belongs the sad privilege; but as he is still absent and may not be present during the day and further delay be construed into disrespect to the deceased, I move we proceed to the consideration of the resolutions; and I will say in vindication of the apparent neglect of my friend, [General WRIGHT,] that the death was inadvertently announced in the Senate without consultation with the members of the House, and no arrangement was made for any order in the notice of the death. Indeed I learned accidentally that the announcement was transpiring in the Senate on yesterday, and have to regret the lack of proper opportunity to prepare a more suitable obituary of the deceased.

The SPEAKER. The Clerk will read the resolutions.

The Clerk read as follows:

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
December 17, 1866.

Resolved, That the Senate has heard with deep sensibility the announcement of the death of Hon. WILLIAM WRIGHT, while a Senator in Congress from the State of New Jersey.

Resolved, That as a testimonial of respect for the memory of the deceased, the members of the Senate will wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days.

Resolved, That these proceedings be communicated to the family of the deceased by the Secretary of the Senate.

Resolved, That as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased the Senate do now adjourn.

Ordered, That the Secretary communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives.

Attest: J. W. FORNEY,
Secretary.

Mr. NEWELL. Mr. Speaker, in conformity with an appropriate and impressive usage the Representatives of a great nation pause in the midst of their deliberations to consecrate a day to the memory of a deceased associate and friend, and I crave the indulgence of the House while I occupy a brief period of the time allotted the mournful ceremonies of this occasion to offer my tribute of homage and respect to the memory of one who was an honored citizen and Senator of the State which it is my privilege in part to represent.

Again and again has death invaded these Halls. In the providence of God these frequent visitations come to warn us that we may not hope exemption from the inexorable decree that "in the midst of life we are in death," and that "be ye also ready" is the solemn admonition announced to us from childhood to the grave, in tones not to be misunderstood, by the great and the lowly, as they successively journey into the dark valley "where each must take his chamber in the silent halls of death." The higher the position, the more eminent the character of him we may be called upon to mourn, the more impressive is the lesson designed to be taught and the greater heed should we give to the admonition.

WILLIAM WRIGHT, late Senator from the State of New Jersey, died at his residence in the city of Newark on the 1st day of November last, in his seventy-seventh year, after a protracted and distressing illness, in the midst of his own devoted and affectionate household, in the full exercise of his mental faculties, with an abiding and unshaken faith in the Christian religion, and the cherished hope of a blissful immortality.

His father, a physician of great learning and

reputation, designed him for one of the professions, and had placed him at a classical school preparatory to a college course, when, suddenly departing this life, the son was thrown upon his own resources, and his necessities compelled him to seek a mechanical occupation which promised earlier and more remunerative returns for his labor.

In 1822 he became a resident of New Jersey, and for many years devoted his entire energies assiduously to business, and rapidly assumed the leading position in trade and commercial circles. He subsequently established branches of his house in all the prominent cities of the South, and became widely known throughout the country as a wealthy and eminently successful manufacturer and merchant.

Upon retiring from active participation in the business of his firm he entered public life, was repeatedly made mayor of his city, was twice elected a Representative in Congress from a district remarkable for the enterprise and intelligence of its citizens, was a candidate for the office of Governor, and twice appointed by the Legislature of his State to a seat in the Senate of the United States. Few men, indeed, can boast of such a succession of honorable positions. Examples like his will shine out in the pages of our history as beacons to guide American youth to honorable fame. He was the architect of his own fortune. He cleared, by the force of his own strong will and determined hand, the rugged pathway of his early life, and attained an exalted place and high distinction among his fellow-men, with none of the advantages which attach to birth and education, but by application and industry, by an honest and honorable course he formed his own character and distinction, and has left them as a rich inheritance to his descendants.

As a legislator Mr. Wright was diffident and cautious of speech and seldom thrust himself upon the notice of the Senate or House, and indeed rarely rose to speak; but among those who could truly appreciate such qualities his sterling good sense, his practical wisdom, his unerring judgment and tact, did not fail to stamp him as a man, who in many of the qualities that go furthest to constitute worth for

the practical duties of legislation, had few equals. His public duties were faithfully performed, and he was ever true to the principles he sought to represent. While he knew no fear or hesitation in the expression of his own political views, he extended the largest tolerance and charity to all who held different sentiments. Indeed his was true charity, striving to do good as he had opportunity and to speak evil of none.

He was possessed of great urbanity of manner and dignity of deportment, and never violated the characteristics of a gentleman in his intercourse with the world; while in all those more intimate and tender relations which bound him to his friends and his kindred he was all that friendship could ask, or affection claim, or humanity or kindness demand, and in that higher and more solemn relation which he bore to the Author of us all he sought to be exact in the duties enjoined by the sacred behests of religion, and in the closing scenes of life's flickering, final hour he leaned with humble trust upon the merits of his Saviour. Calmly he confronted the grim messenger and with Christian dignity resigned him to his fate.

I knew him well, Mr. Speaker, and find a mournful pleasure in paying this just tribute to his memory and his virtues. He has passed through the vicissitudes of a long and eventful life. He has met and manfully fulfilled the duties allotted to him on earth, and left us to follow a little longer the shadows which he has exchanged for unutterable realities. Death came to him in the ripeness of his years, in the fullness of his honors, and no stain rests upon his honored name. His life was full of moral beauty, and with mingled feelings of respect and sorrow we commemorate his virtues and lament his death.

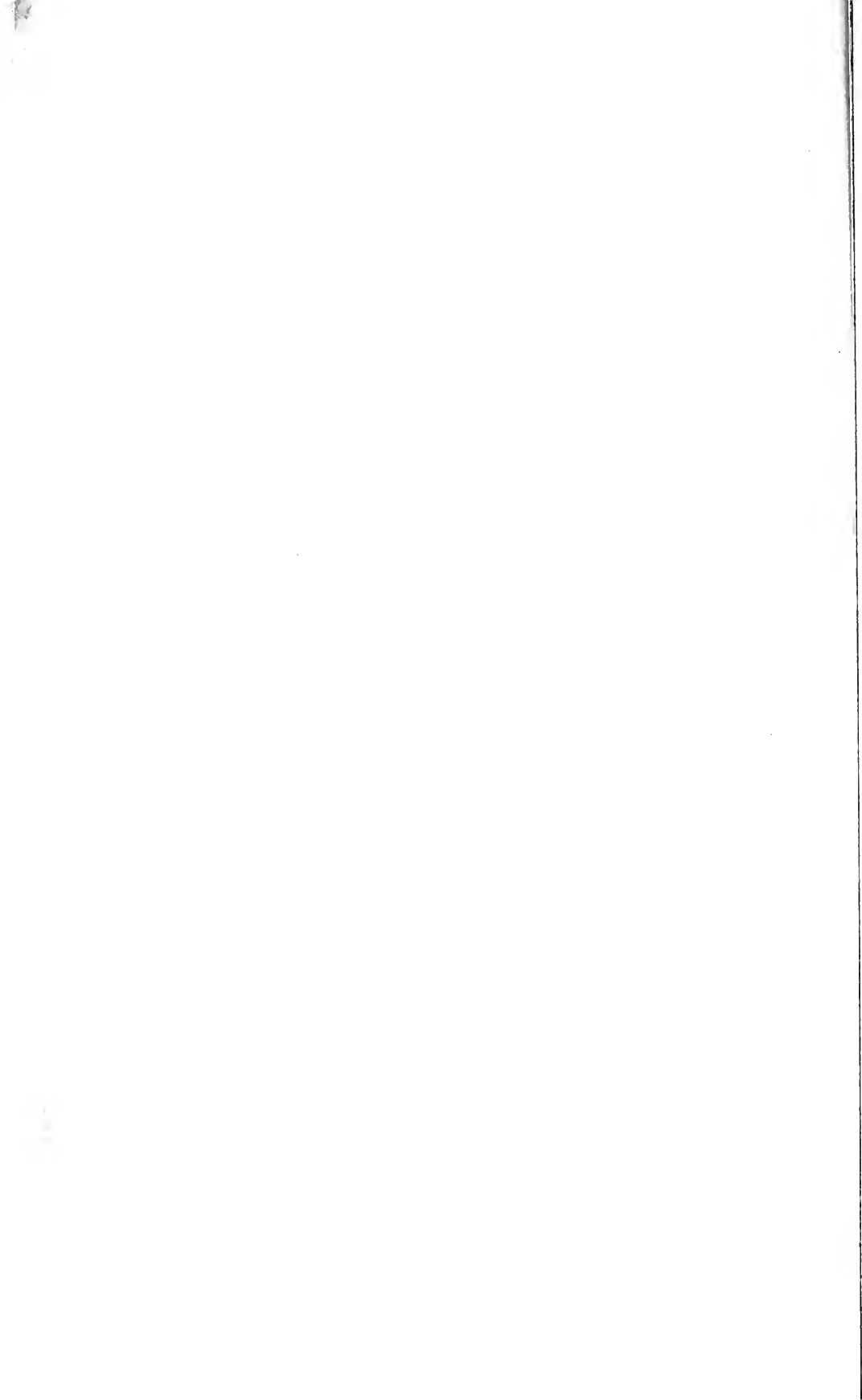
I beg leave to offer for adoption the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the House of Representatives has received with deep sensibility the intelligence of the death of Hon. WILLIAM WRIGHT, late a Senator in Congress from the State of New Jersey.

Resolved, That as a mark of respect for the memory of the deceased, the members and officers of this House will go into mourning by wearing crape on the left arm for thirty days.

Resolved, That as a further mark of respect for the memory of the deceased, the House do now adjourn.

The resolutions were unanimously adopted, and the House adjourned.



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